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ABSTRACT

The multicultural context of English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) instruction in Indonesia is discussed from two perspectives. The first is that of EFL instruction in junior high school, a broad and rapidly growing population due to the new 9-year compulsory education requirements. The second perspective described is that of the population needing EFL study for employment purposes and career advancement, a narrower but dynamic group important for human resource development. It is argued that in this context, in which 560 languages are spoken by 340 ethnic groups and English is not the lingua franca, global cultures, not just American or British, must be represented in EFL instructional materials in order to give them relevance to these EFL populations. The kinds of contexts in which Indonesians are exposed to English language are examined, at home, in schools, and in daily life outside the home. Materials developed for use at a prestigious language institute are then discussed and outlined briefly. The materials feature local and "foreign" cultural content side-by-side, and focus on issues of universal concern, such as personal welfare, living environment, global relations, and human rights and resources. (MSE)

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Integrating Global Cultures in EFL Materials

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INTEGRATING GLOBAL CULTURES IN EFL MATERIALS

English: part of Indonesia's basic school curriculum

This presentation invites you to Indonesia, to a country situated strategically on the crossroads between two continents and two oceans-- a country where 560 languages are spoken by 340 ethnic groups, each with its own unique culture. In all its diversity, it is also a country that has *Bahasa Indonesia* as the lingua franca. It is against Indonesia's diverse cultural background that we attempt to give you some insight into the way teachers and materials writers grapple with priorities, constraints and possibilities of introducing culture into their materials.

This session is packaged into two distinct perspectives. One concerns English-Language Teaching in Junior High, encompassing the broadest single ELT student population in Indonesia. With the instigation of the 9-year compulsory education by the government--that is, with the inclusion of three years of junior high-- the total number of the junior high school population is expected to increase tremendously within the next two years.

The second perspective concerns a much narrower, but selected and immensely dynamic slice of the population: those that need English primarily for further study, for getting jobs, for seeking career promotion. These are the students that enroll at probably the most prestigious English-language course in Indonesia--the LIA Language Institute, of Yayasan LIA, a Jakarta-based foundation. These course participants constitute an important part of the cadre for human resource development in our country.

As a teacher and principal of a Junior High School in a Jakarta suburb, I am concerned with the first perspective; especially, as I also do research on the implementation of change in the new junior high school curriculum.

With culture being the focus of our presentation, one question of immediate importance here is: Why should English become part of Indonesia's basic education? As junior high becomes compulsory, English becomes compulsory for the Indonesian individual: And this is a matter of culture. Within the rapid globalization process, it is necessary that English be introduced as one of the prerequisites for integration into the global community. If we view the process of overall language needs in Indonesia, Indonesians might thus learn to speak any one of the vernaculars in order to establish their ethnic identity or to integrate into the ethnic society in which they reside. They must learn Indonesian in order to establish their national identity and be part of the Indonesian community. Finally, they must now learn English in order to become part of the global community.

The global outlook entails a new awareness not just of global cultures, but of the own culture as well. The more we know about our own culture, the more we

can appreciate another culture. Learning English is a fruitful way of learning another culture. For instance, living in a tropical country, we might get an inkling of the winter season when we look at the winter-scapes on Christmas cards, or hear "Jingle Bells" flaring from shopping-mall loudspeakers during the Christmas season. But experience in my own classroom shows that a well-chosen simple poem discussed in class will make the students relate more acutely to the atmosphere of the different seasons. Being familiar with the different kinds of seasons might help the prospective businessman in deciding on the best season to promote a new product in a country that has four seasons. Having a knowledge of the different seasons might also make us smile understandingly at foreign tourists who throw off as much of their attire as possible to take advantage of the sun on our golden beaches. Indonesians, on the other hand, tend to shy away from getting tanned.

Knowing that all school-going Indonesians will have at least 3 years of compulsory English instruction, you might come to Indonesia one day and venture into the more isolated parts of the country. Then you can be sure you won't have trouble communicating in English. What you do is look out for the local junior high school -- for that's the place where English is spoken. If you take with you brochures, postcards, stamps, and small souvenirs from your country, you might exchange them with student-made brochures and leaflets depicting local folklore, dances, and other cultural aspects--the result of junior high class assignments. And your brochures and leaflets will enrich the school's resource of authentic materials. By learning English, junior high school students learn to appreciate other cultures and learn to communicate their own culture to the world. But don't expect this situation to exist right now. The new curriculum was launched in 1994. Just give us another five years ....).

Global cultures in EFL materials: Necessary for the Indonesian context

We have seen how important English is for a country like Indonesia, to the extent that the language has been included in the curriculum of the newly adopted 9-year compulsory education system. We just shared with you our vision of junior high school in remote villages, with the proud sign "English is spoken here." Now, how do we reach this vision? For sure, by teaching the English language. But, what do we give our students?

We would like to discuss what we have developed so far in the course of writing EFL materials at the LIA Language Institute, of Yayasan LIA--an educational institute with over 60,000 English course participants (80% in Jakarta, the rest in 14 other cities in Indonesia). The students (80% of them senior high school and college students) have enrolled at the course with a variety of objectives in mind, but mostly geared towards purposes for college study and career opportunities. However, the majority of these students (around 85%) are participating in the English classes for needs in the country. Without immediate plans to visit foreign countries, they all find English competency a necessity, to the

extent that they take on an English course, apart from the English instruction they have in high school.

At our TESOL presentation in Long Beach last year, we underlined that examples and situations in teaching materials should primarily be based upon the local environment; hence, materials should ideally be written by local writers, who are presumed to be well familiar with their audience, and as such know what to write. However, we realize, from experience, that there is a scarcity of local materials writers. The point is then that whoever is writing the materials should do his/her homework--that is, studying the local environment and conditions, first of all. And this implies the local culture.

English materials, then, must be written for around 40 million students, made up of 340 ethnic groups , speaking *Bahasa Indonesia* plus any one or more of the 560 ethnic languages. Residence areas of these students are scattered over Indonesia's 27 provinces, with various living and cultural environments. Schools are not only located in a world city like Jakarta, Indonesia's capital (population: 12 million). There are schools in remote places, like Wamena, Irian Jaya, perched on heights of about two- to three-hundred thousand feet above sea level, accessible only by walking three long weeks through mountainous rain forests, or (provided one has the means) by a 45-minute flight from the capital of the province. To cater for such a variety of student population, contents of the materials must be carefully selected.

For the materials to appeal to the majority of students, various local cultures must be introduced. Beginning with local cultures (the most familiar to the students), contents of the materials can go global . We would add here that, as materials writers for a developing nation like Indonesia, we must see to it that materials not only focus on the language aspect, but also be an aid for general education.

Talking about culture, one would perhaps ask, what about the native speakers' culture? Shouldn't that have priority to let students have naturally be presented through the English language, as well as in the course of integrating global cultures. So it is not only American or British culture that is being discussed throughout the textbook, but culture from all over the world.

English we see at present as a global or international language. It is not anymore a language representing the Anglo-Saxons. Neither do we want to be involved in the polemic about which English we should teach, or worse, which is better: British or American English, not to mention the other "native Englishes." We were amazed, and certainly amused, about how sensitive this matter still was in a recently published series of Letters to the Editor in "Jakarta Post," a Jakarta-based English-language newspaper. Interesting to note was the fact that there still seems to be two opposing poles concerning the issue of "genuine" English . All letter writers being native-speakers of English, one claimed that English is "like a piece of antique" and so should "be valued in its most original form." The anti-pole argued that, in becoming an international language, English has been "enriched rather than degraded."

We do understand this feeling of despair about a cultural aspect--in this case a language--that is being "stolen " or degraded. (Let me illustrate what happened in our context: On a visit to Malaysia, a friend of mine fumed when she saw that "batik" and "wayang," which she had thought of being Indonesia's sole cultural right, was taken over by and considered products of the Malaysian culture.) What intrigued us about the British vs. American language feud was that all letter writers were Indonesian residents, and so were supposed to be knowledgeable about English as used in the global setting. To us Indonesians, English has become an additional language, a foreign language to acquire--but one that we had better master, if we want to be players in the global world.

In developing materials, then, the crux of the matter is how to blend the local cultures and global cultures into a comprehensive, cohesive, linguistically (and politically) correct whole, while facilitating the acquisition of English. Idealistically, each region in Indonesia should have its own materials depending on the regional priorities. For example, for learners in Bali, a major tourist attraction, emphasis on the materials should be on the tourism industry. In the same line, foreign cultures should be well-chosen. For example, extensive focusing on the Superbowl would be wasted on most Indonesian students, for the simple reason that American football is practically unknown in Indonesia: students would have a hard time figuring out what is going on. If the OJ Simpson case in America is called the trial of the century and OJ's worldly fame taken for granted, in Indonesia the teacher mentioning OJ in class would most probably meet blank stares. On the other hand, the telephone is the most common thing in America. But students in remote Wamena who must simulate a telephone conversation as outlined in the materials need preliminary explanation on what a telephone is. This does not imply that foreign cultures and advanced technology should not be included or be kept to a minimum in EFL materials. As mentioned earlier, to "go international," students in a developing nation like ours should be exposed to general education, which includes foreign cultures, as well as technological innovations. What is essential is that materials writers should be aware of students' (the audience's) familiarity or unfamiliarity with particular cultural aspects. Materials should be written by those who are familiar with the local needs, wants, and problems; and not be dictated by writers who lack an understanding of these aspects.

Many other issues can be brought up regarding the Indonesian and foreign culture to be considered in writing materials. To underline and illustrate what we mean here, we would like to give some samples of what our institution, Yayasan LIA, has been doing in developing our own textbooks, in its attempts to meet the needs of EFL learners in Indonesia--particularly those of the senior high school and college level.

Access to English in the Indonesian context

But, first, let's take a look at the English-language contexts that learners are exposed to in a country like Indonesia, particularly those in Jakarta. As stated

before, settings within Indonesia may differ from one another. For one thing, students in big cities and in tourist areas get more exposure to English than those in other places.

At home, there is television with two national and a number of privately-owned broadcasts. In addition, at a relatively high monthly fee, people in a number of big cities can get access to foreign broadcasts, like CNN, MTV, etc. Prime movies on national TV broadcasts are English -language movies from USA, the majority of which have translated subtitling. Japanese, South-American, and Indian movies are all Indonesian-dubbed. Viewed from the English-language aspect, people in big cities prefer the original English speech; however, the majority of viewers live in outlying areas, and they need the translation most. It needs mentioning that all foreign movies have Indonesian subtitling, which, I must admit, leaves much to be desired--that is, translation is sometimes not accurate. Interesting to note is that most errors occur due to a cultural misunderstanding. Especially idioms or specific terms are very much prone to literal translation. Just how would you translate the Halloween slogan of "Trick and Treat."

In Indonesia there are a couple of locally published English-language newspapers, like the "Jakarta Post" mentioned before; their circulation is of course way below their Indonesian counterparts. Imported English papers and magazines , although available, are expensive. The same applies to books.

English instruction in high school might be sufficient for the learners'' needs at those levels of study, but often found deficient for college study and for career opportunities. Reference sources and even textbooks in many college departments still rely on English-language materials. And in terms of career opportunities, most job offers of prestigious and even less prestigious companies ask for English fluency. This does not mean that English skills are urgent for all jobs; but a mastery of English is found to be an asset for the company and for the individual, especially to be well prepared for Indonesia's plan to boost international communication in a few years to come. Still, English courses are seen as more necessary in big cities than in small towns, as job competition in big cities is tougher.

For an increasing number of Jakarta high school and college students, taking an English course has become a way of life. And for some students, the four-hour-a-week English classes is not enough. They also join a two-hour Saturday gathering of the English Club--to have fun, but more importantly to get more access to English. When asked of a forty-odd number of club members, what they thought they need English for, or what their real-life goals were, their response touched on the following details, given here at random order:

- get good grades for English at the college admission test
- understand college reference books and textbooks
- achieve the required TOEFL score for college admission abroad
- understand English-language movies
- get better opportunities for a job
- share knowledge

- enjoy and appreciate entertainment (music, sports, etc.)
- socialize with people from all walks of life
- have better chances for career development
- be able to speak English (in Indonesia) when the opportunity arises
- be able to read English-language magazines, novels, newspapers, etc.
- be able to communicate in English on visits abroad
- study abroad
- be able to write letters
- broaden horizons
- become an English teacher

Course materials

Let's now get down to business--that is, show you some samples of materials in use and being developed at the General English course of the (Yayasan) LIA Language Institute--from the Basic, to the Intermediate and Advanced levels. In terms of culture, we start off with the local culture, then integrate foreign cultures, including the native speakers'. Again, as mentioned before, an awareness of our own culture will make people appreciate other people's cultures. Or to say it in another way, we cannot appreciate other people's culture, if we are not aware of our own, or take our own culture for granted.

Our materials feature content a lot, in a way that language activities mix with content development. When talking about culture, we do not specifically underline socio-cultuaral aspects. Being aware of peoples from other cultures is part of culture, too. Foreign language learners tend to focus excessively on the language aspect. So when we want the students to focus on foreign cultures, then this should be integrated in the class activities, where students get exposure not only to international celebrities, foreign festivals, foreign lifestyles, etc., but also to universal or global affairs, like the human rights and the environmental issues. But what is unique in our materials is that all these global matters are set on a background of or side by side with the students' local cultures. In this way they become more aware of their own culture, while they get exposure to other people's cultures, and eventually we hope that they can appreciate all cultures of the world. And what is important is that they acquire this through English. The students work towards English competency; at the same time they add to their resource of general knowledge about the world---with global cultures integrated.

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ADVANCED ONE : OUR PERSONAL WELFARE

ADVANCED TWO: OUR ENVIRONS

ADVANCED THREE: GLOBAL CONCERNS

ADVANCED FOUR: OUR STANCE

ADVANCED THREE: GLOBAL CONCERNS

UNIT ONE	DIFFERENT CONDITIONS AMONG WORLD NATIONS
UNIT TWO	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
UNIT THREE	DIFFERENT CULTURES AMONG NATIONS
UNIT FOUR	SAVING THE RICHES OF THE WORLD
UNIT FIVE	WORLD ACHIEVEMENTS
UNIT SIX	HOPE FOR A BETTER WORLD

ADVANCED FOUR: OUR STANCE

UNIT ONE	AN INDEPENDENT NATION
UNIT TWO	THE IMPACT OF MODERNIZATION
UNIT THREE	HUMAN RIGHTS
UNIT FOUR	HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
UNIT FIVE	THE MAKING OF A LEADER
UNIT SIX	WORKING TOWARDS GLOBAL WELL-BEING

Yayasan LIA, Jakarta, Indonesia

ADVANCED ONE: OUR PERSONAL WELFARE

UNIT FOUR : WELL-BEING FOR THE FAMILY

A. Looking at the concept of home
Expressing individual associations of "home"
Using expressions that use the word "home"
B. Looking at the concept of the family
Defending our own opinions
C. Family planning as a means of achieving welfare
Why family planning
Imparting information to a foreign audience
Participating in the family planning program
Free-writing to express our ideals about the family

ADVANCED THREE: GLOBAL CONCERNS

UNIT TWO: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A. Interdependence among nations
Kinds of relationships between countries
Zeroing in on our own resources
Identifying relationships
B. Looking at Indonesia's international relations
Promoting tourism
C. Looking at relationships between groups of nations
Analyzing headlines
Focusing on the newspaper lead
Anticipating the content of a news article
D. Looking at self-interest in relationships
War as the result of self-interest
Writing statements of fact and statements of opinion
Looking at impacts of war
Focusing on war personalities
Finding associations
Telling about war heroes